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December 15, 2008

Senator Eric Coleman
Representative Art Feldman
Co-Chairmen of the Continuing Legislative Committee on Planning & Economic Development
Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Norwich -- Proposal to Reverse Recent Change to State Plan

Dear Sirs:

I am writing as a certified professional planner with 14 years of experience in planning and development, as a former town planner, an executive director of a not-for-profit housing organization, and currently as a private planning consultant. I am also active and engaged in professional planning organizations.

I worked closely with the Legislature's Planning and Development Committee between 2003 and 2005 to modernize the requirements and policies of the State Plan of Conservation and Development. In recent years I have worked with individual members of the Committee to address issues and concerns related to the interpretation of State Plan of Conservation and Development and its Locational Guide Map. Throughout both of these processes it has always been understood that the State Plan of Conservation and Development and its Locational Guide Map should not be viewed or interpreted as state zoning policies. In addition, it has also been understood that the role of Continuing Legislative Committee on Planning and Economic Development is not to act as zoning commission, approving and denying specific development proposals.

I have been following with great interest the amendment process of the Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut over the years, and specifically how it has played out in the above-referenced application. Simply put, the indecision, second-guessing and political pressure associated with the City of Norwich's application can do nothing but result in extraordinarily bad public policy. I say this because it appears that the Committee is being asked to do what amounts to engage in the review of the merits of the proposed development project associated with the land at issue in the City's application. This Committee should not allow this

to happen on its watch since it is charged with setting policy, rather than assessing the pros and cons of parcel-specific plans. That is the job of the City of Norwich in this case.

Please deny the application. Doing so would send the right message to the planning community that the State of Connecticut is committed to long-term, reasoned planning.

Respectfully submitted,



Donald J. Poland, AICP
Planning Consultant